

Serial No. 09/966,450

Please amend the above-identified patent application, without prejudice, as follows:

In the Claims:

Claims 1-7 (cancel)

8. (previously presented) An apparatus for molding substrates from a starting material in flowable form, comprising a plurality of molding chambers and a plurality of nozzles aligned with said molding chambers for introducing the starting material into said molding chambers, said molding chambers and said nozzles mounted on a rotor capable of rotation about a central axis, said nozzles being displaceable in a direction parallel to said central axis, such that as said rotor rotates, said nozzles engage and disengage said molding chambers.

9. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a heated reservoir for supplying said starting material to said nozzles, and wherein said molding chambers are at a temperature below that of the reservoir.

10. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a plurality of valves each comprising a valve seat with a gasket therein, said valves being disposed in flow paths connecting the reservoir and the nozzles, said valve seat having the geometry of a gradually tapering hole, such that as said gasket closes starting material is sucked back from said nozzles.

Claims 11-13 (canceled)

14. An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein ~~the each of~~ the plurality of nozzles injects the starting material into a corresponding molding chamber while rotating about a common rotor in alignment with the molding chamber.

15. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the starting material sets, gels, or solidifies in the molding chamber that is moving along a rotary path defined by the rotor and rotation about the central axis.

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16. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the starting material is a thermal setting material.

17. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 16 wherein the thermal setting material is at a temperature above its melting point prior to injection into the molding.

18. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the starting material contains a medicant and is a thermal setting material at a temperature above its melting point and below the decomposition temperature of the medicant.

19. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the starting material is a polymeric material in the form of solid particles in suspension, a molten mass, paste or solution.

The recited nozzles herein are required to be mounted on a rotor capable of rotation about a central axis and to be displaceable in a direction parallel to said central axis, such that as said rotor rotates, said nozzles engage and disengage said molding chambers. The Examiner has not articulated any features of the cavities and holes having these recited properties. Thus, Applicants submit that Kato fails to disclose at least one element of the claimed invention.

Claim 14 provides that the plurality of nozzles injects the starting material into a corresponding molding chamber while rotating about a common rotor in alignment with the molding chamber. The Examiner refers to tables 1 and 2 at station B as showing rotation about a central axis. Each of these tables, however, rotates around their own distinct axis. They do not share a common rotor. Kato does not disclose or suggest the combination of molding chambers and nozzles mounted on a common rotor that rotates about a central axis.

Claim 15 provides that the starting material sets, gels, or solidifies in the molding chamber that is moving along a rotary path defined by the rotor and rotation about the central axis. There is no evidence that the powder in Kato is changed in any manner other than compression. The terms set, gel and solidify all refer to fundamentally different changes in the physical state of the flowable material beyond mere compaction.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants submit that the Kato fails to anticipate the claimed invention of claims 8, 14 and 15. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his anticipation rejections of claims 8, 14 and 15 in view of Kato.

The Examiner rejects claims 8, 9 and 14-19 as being unpatentable over Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,276,917 ("Gutierrez et al."). The Examiner cites Gutierrez as showing heating of a reservoir to aid in compression of tablets. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Kato fails to disclose a number of elements recited in claims 8, 14 and 15 as described above. Gutierrez does not address any of these shortcomings as the Examiner readily concedes the reference is limited to showing a heating reservoir to aid in compression of tablets. The basis for rejecting the remainder of the claims is unclear given the clear limitation on the teachings in Gutierrez.